23; Franck--326-327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 206, 291, 411

"It looked strange to see men [327] wearing only a loin-cloth, and a dagger in a scabbard woven like a basket and held by a fiber band across the chest, putting up telegraph-poles; but the French insist on being able to talk to one another anywhere in Indo-China, and government ownership of telegraph lines has at least one advantage over the high-cost private system of the United States and China."

149: Reinach

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

205, 206 ●

[For information on the postal and telegraph facilities in the various provinces and districts of French Laos at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Category 116, pp. 200-217.]

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally,

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of

(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

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[206]
[439]
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Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs.

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

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871

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows:

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the College Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

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Apostolic missions.

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

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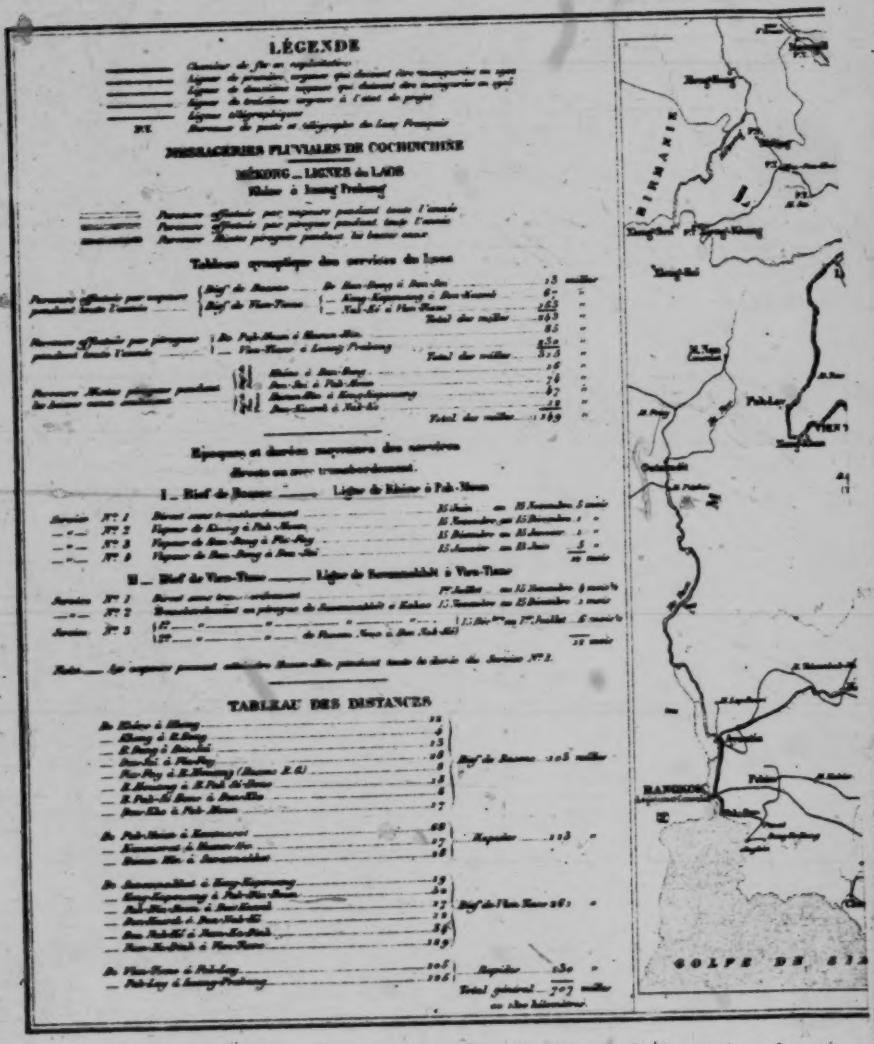

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part A /between pp. 480-1/

149: Reinach--365b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part B /between pp. 480-1/

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[113]

which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

505

6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant